



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Parolee Arrested after Abusing Disabled Victim in her Residence**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA – March 22, 2012**

On March 19, 2012 at 4:05 p.m., SBPD Officers Jonathan Hettema, Jared Hall, and April DeBlauw responded to a residence on Bath Street in downtown Santa Barbara on a call from a woman reporting that an unwanted male subject was inside of her house. Upon arrival the officers were met by a female friend of the victim who advised that the suspect was still inside of the residence. As she was speaking to the officers the suspect, Craig Lewis Thomas, age 49, appeared behind her in the doorway. Thomas was taken into custody without further incident. The officers were then able to contact the victim and reporting party, a 61-year old disabled female who has severely restricted mobility.

Investigation indicates that at the time of the incident the victim was lying in bed waiting for her friend to arrive to give her a ride downtown. When the victim heard a knock at the door she assumed it was her friend and stated, "Come in." Much to her surprise, the victim saw Thomas enter the room and she became frightened. The victim recognized Thomas, having met him once several years earlier when his wife had prepared a meal for the victim. When Thomas entered the bedroom he immediately sat in the victim's wheelchair, her sole source of mobility, which made her feel terrified. Nevertheless, the victim remained composed and tried to act and speak calmly so as not to provoke Thomas. Thomas stated to the victim that he was now divorced and looking for someone new with which to have a relationship. Thomas then began fondling his genitals through his clothing while seated in the wheelchair. He then repeatedly told the victim to touch him, ultimately leaning close to her face and demanding in a threatening tone that she do so. The victim repeatedly denied Thomas's requests and stated that her friend would arrive at the residence at any moment to give her a ride downtown. Thomas told the victim that he would give her a ride. The victim now felt afraid that she was going to be raped or killed. Thomas then went to the bathroom of the residence where the victim believed he masturbated. Upon exiting the bathroom he stepped outside and smoked a cigarette, at which time the victim called 911.

While Thomas was standing outside, the victim's friend arrived and was surprised to see an unknown man smoking to the front of the victim's residence. As she approached Thomas told her that he was going to give the victim a ride and then walked back into the residence. The victim's friend followed Thomas into the residence and upon seeing the victim, and every time they made eye contact thereafter, observed the victim mouth the word "help" to her. The victim's friend also became frightened, however remained at the residence and stayed calm in the presence of Thomas until officers arrived.

Thomas stated that he was visiting the victim and denied any wrongdoing.

The officers discovered that Thomas is currently on parole for a narcotics offense and conducted a search of his vehicle. Inside they discovered small quantities of cocaine and marijuana.

Crime Scene Investigator Officer Brian Sathre responded and recovered potential DNA evidence from the bathroom of the residence.

Thomas was arrested and booked at County Jail for the following felonies: attempted sexual battery upon a physically incapacitated adult, false imprisonment against a dependent adult, burglary, and possession of a controlled substance. Additionally, he was booked on a misdemeanor charge of aggravated trespassing. The bail amount for these offenses is \$50,000. Thomas's parole agent was notified and she placed a no-bail parole hold on Thomas.

Booking photograph provided by the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department.



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